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FOR WOMEN

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AN EVERY MONDAY REPORT FOR BUSY WOMEN WHO NEED TO KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON

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TO THE FAR RIGHT, MARCH! While both Republicans and Democrats are currently conducting vigorous campaigns to get out the November vote, there's one group neither party has to urge twice in this year of enthusiastic conservatism: the Minute Women of the U.S.A. Inc. Membership in the ultra-conservative organization demands that each woman pledge to vote in every election or forfeit membership. One of their purposes is "to fight Communism, Socialism, Fascism or Collectivism in any form." Other principles: "Belief in God, states' rights, clean politics, a sound dollar, patriotic teaching in our schools and colleges." In Houston, Tex., which has one of the more active chapters across the country, a reporter notes: "Some Birchers consider them so right-wing that they're not even welcome in the Birch Society." They are against the UN (in Houston several years ago they successfully pressured the school board into dropping a UN-sponsored essay contest), and from time to time they take stands against the Ford Foundation, the League of Women Voters ("left-wingers"), the American Friends Service Committee, etc. A 1963 issue of the group's newsletter, discussing a Ford Foundation grant for a cultural and educational exchange between the U.S. and Africa, commented: "Certainly these particular Africans have nothing to give us by way of 'culture,' and we have all the 'Africans' in this country now that we need."

As an organization, the Minute Women (no relation to the Minutemen) shy away from publicity. Information on them is difficult to come by. Their current national chairman, Mrs. Dorothy Frankston of Wheeling, W. Va., told The Insider's Newsletter: "We never give out the number of chapters or the number of members. The chapters are autonomous." Even her hometown newspaper, the News-Register (independent-Democrat), has no file on Minute Women activities as an organization--though its editor says Mrs. Frankston is "an active letter-writer and does not agree with me on anything I write." The organization has no constitution or bylaws; officers, from the national level down, are appointed. Motions from the floor at "cluster" meetings are prohibited. Minute Women "are urged to appeal as individual citizens... No member shall sign any communication as a Minute Woman." They consider pens their "best weapons"--next to their votes. With this policy in mind, they can swamp legislators, newspapers or school boards with mail for or against an issue--all seeming to stem spontaneously from unrelated writers. Are the Minute Women behind any one Presidential candidate this year? "Politics is part of every woman's responsibility," says Mrs. Frankston, but "we do not get into the political picture."